

“On Actions of Hostilities against Islam and the Muslim Community”

Wider Church Ministries/Global Ministries

Report covers the period July, 2011-April, 2013

Respectfully submitted by Peter Makari

This resolution, adopted with near unanimity, includes four “resolved” clauses calling for action, as follows:

“Therefore be it resolved, that the 28th General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its clear support for neighbors in the Muslim community, both in the United States and around the world, who feel the impact of anti-Islamic rhetoric and action; and denounces actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear;

Be it further resolved that the General Synod encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to seek ways to learn more about Islam, to engage in relationships with Muslims, and to invite other ecumenical and inter-faith bodies to join with us in this effort .;

Be it further resolved that the national setting of the United Church of Christ make available resources to learn about and engage with people of other faiths, and Muslims in particular, and document and publicize actions taken in support of Muslims and people of other faiths, especially in the face of hatred, fear, ignorance, and what has been labeled Islamophobia.

Be it finally resolved that members and settings of the United Church of Christ speak out against religiously and racially-motivated hatred, violence and actions, such as the desecration of religious symbols and sacred texts, and support and publicize public policies, governmental actions, and public activities that ensure our value of religious diversity.”

The national setting of the UCC has been actively involved in various aspects of implementation of this resolution. Such involvement over the past biennium has included:

1. Increased involvement in, and leadership of, the national campaign, “Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values,” a coalition of US Jewish, Christian, and Muslim organizations committed to opposing religious bigotry, especially against Muslims.
2. Partnering with the Discover Islam foundation to disseminate a useful set of 6 DVDs about Islam to each Conference Minister and to each member of the Executive Council. The DVD set includes six half-hour programs, as follows:
 - Islam: An American Faith
 - Christians & Islam
 - Islam: Faith & History
 - Women in Islam
 - Islam: A Faith Hijacked
 - African Americans & Islam

Discover Islam made the DVD set available to the UCC free of charge. The Collegium sent a cover e-mail to Conference Ministers and to the chair of the Executive Council, after which, three copies of the DVD set were sent to each Conference office, and one set is available for each member of the Executive Council. Additional copies are available to UCC settings, free of charge, based on a simple request.

3. Summarizing the discussion at General Synod and sharing information about the adoption of the resolution. Such dissemination of information included links to the resolution itself and to stories about it, as well as to texts, stories, and reflections about (and by) the presence and impact of Mr. Muhammad Sammak, representative of our partner, the Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue (Lebanon and the Middle East). This resource was published following General Synod [<http://globalministries.org/news/mee/general-synod-and-assembly.html>].
4. Managing and updating a webpage entitled, “Countering Islamophobia” and adding resources and links to it to support education about Islam, and the industry of propagating Islamophobia [<http://globalministries.org/mee/countering-islamophobia/>]. In addition, an annotated list of “recommended reading” is available online about Interfaith Relations and Islam [<http://globalministries.org/mee/countering-islamophobia/>].
5. Supporting the National Council of Churches’ interfaith work. The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, the UCC’s Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, and Dr. Peter Makari, Executive for the Middle East and Europe, are both members of the NCC’s Interfaith Relations Commission. Peter serves as Co-Chair.